EXTRACT FROM AN ESSAY

ON

The PROGRESS of LEARNING among the SCOTS,

ANNEXED TO

An ESSAY on the STATE of LEARNING in ITALY,

Publiſhed lately in the Italian Language,

By CARLO DEANINA, a PIEDMONTESE.

Tranſmitted in a LETTER from ROME, dated February 5th.

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PREFACE.

THE following excerpt (as, probably, the entire work of Signor Carlo Deanina, is not yet publiſhed in Britain) was thought deſerving of the public view.

The attention that the ingenious of other nations give to the literary performances of the Scots, and their impartial praiſe, reflect an honour on the genius and improvement of our countrymen, and may be thought to have ſome effect in exciting a noble emulation, and encouraging the purſuits of literary fame.

Thoſe attentive to the progreſs of learning abroad and at home, paſs over the tools of party, whoſe works, tho' marked with genius and capacity, are ſoon buried in oblivion: And thoſe that are fond of the name of author, tho' utterly unqualified to pleaſe or entertain the public, are properly puniſhed with that neglect and contempt which their undeſired productions have deſerved.

By this happy diſtinction, folly and vanity are expoſed; and merit, even without gain, rewarded: And thoſe writings that do honour to human nature, that feed the ſoul with wiſdom, and advance the true happineſs of mankind, are alone recommended to the preſent age; and a preſage given of their laſting uſefulneſs or immortality.

Tho' unknown to Signor Deanina, or have come late to his obſervation, the writings of many more of our countrymen are known to the learned at Rome, and highly valued by them. The Italian tranſlation of Fingal will ſoon be publiſhed; and * a late work of an eminent judge, who, having exhauſted and unfolded every thing in his own ſcience, has ſet a high example of ingenious and learned inquiry, is read with pleaſure, and does honour to himſelf and to his country.

* Elements of Criticiſm, by Lord Kaims

It is not meant by this publication to inflame any national diſtinction, which, at this time, perhaps, has been unneceſſarily awakened, and is indecently treated. The keeneſt ſatyre, when gilded with wit, may be ſwallowed, or even found palatable; but groſs ſcurrility is not the weapon of reaſon or of virtue, and like every inſtance of barbarity, is a diſgrace to human nature.

'Tis hoped the praiſes of ingenuity can give no occaſion to jealouſy or chagrin, nor have any other effect than to excite a thirſt of learning, and promote an innocent and uſeful emulation.

The Engliſh, partial to every work of genius from this country, and which have been encouraged and rewarded chiefly by their munificence, have, without envy, applauded and encouraged the learned of every nation, and have themſelves received the moſt diſtinguiſhed praiſe. Of whom it is truly ſaid, and univerſally acknowledged, That they have invented or improved in every ſcience, and in every uſeful art: Nor do they ceaſe to add (tho' unobſerved by a particular writer) continually to their literary fame.

It may in juſtice alſo be affirmed, That, ſurpaſſed by none in military virtue, they have gone beyond all others in naval ſkill and maritime glory: Whilſt the ſons of freedom in this part of the united kingdom, co-operating with them in the ſame purſuits of honour, and united with them in affection and loyalty, reflect with pleaſure on the moſt ſhining of all national virtues, the love of liberty; by which, ever rouſed and animated, and jealous of every encroachment, they have been the powerful guardians of our liberty, and of their own.

SCOTUS.

Berwickſhire,
April 16th, 1763.

EXTRACT from an ESSAY, &c.

IL vigor degli ſtudi e della litteratura duro in Inghilterra piu lungo tempo, che appreſſo altre nazioni; contuttocio, ſe noi ſepariamo l'Inghilterra propria dagli altri regni, che compongono la Gran Bretagna, e forza di confeſſare, che vi ſi vedono pure i veſtigi dell' inevitabile deſtino delle umane coſe. Percioche, a contare i ſoli Ingleſi, molto minere ſi troverebbe eſſere a di nonoſtri il numero de buoni ſcrittori, che non era intorno a trent' anni addietro, ſe la parte che venne manеando in Londra e nelle provincie Britanniche di qua del Tuede non germogliaſſe proſperamente nelle contrade di Scozia, i cui popoli formando co' propri Ingleſi una ſola nazione e ſcrivendo una lingua mediſima, non laſcian, per coſi dire, apparire ogli occhi delle altre nazioni diminuazione o decadenza alcuna negli ſtudi delle belle arti.

In ſomma, due entieri ſecoli erano ſcorſi dallo riſorgimento univerſale delle lettere, che niuno avrebbe potuto penſare, che quel regno doviſſe divenire coſi ſignalmente ſcien-

THE vigour of ſcientific and learned purſuits continued longer in England than in other nations; yet if we conſider England properly ſo called, apart from the other kingdoms whereof Great Britain is made up, it muſt be confeſſed that we meet with traces ſufficiently evident of that inevitable deſtiny which extends to all human affairs. For, taking the Engliſh alone into the account, the number of good writers in our days would be found much leſs than it was about thirty years ago; if the part wanting in London and the Britiſh provinces on this ſide the Tweed were not ſupplied by a proſperous growth in the country of Scotland; whoſe people forming one nation with the proper Engliſh, and writing in the ſame language, ſuffer not to appear, if we may ſo expreſs it, to the eyes of other nations, any diminution or decay in the ſtudies of the fine arts.

After ſpeaking of the ſtate of learning in Scotland, for two hundred years after the revival of letters, he adds,

In a word, two entire ages had elapſed from the time of the general revival of letters, before any one could have imagined that this kingdom ſhould have become ſo diſtinguiſhed by ſcience and erudi-

tifico e letterato. Unua dotto Irlandeſe col ſuo zelo, e colla ſua dottrina, e un nobile e generoſo duca (Argyle) *furono ſpecialmente deſtinati dal cielo a far germogliare e fiorire in quelle fredde e boreali contrade cio che ſcioceamente ſi credeva altre volte che allignar non poteſſe fuorche nel tepido clima dell' Aſia Minore, della Grecia e dell' Italia. Franciſco Hutchinſon venuto in Iſcozia a profeſſarvi la filoſofia, e gli ſtudi di umanita nell' univerſita di Glaſgow, v' inſinuo per tutto il paeſe coll' iſtruzioni a viva voce, e con egregi opere date alle ſtampe, un vivo genio per gli ſtudi filoſofici e letterari, &c.*

tion. A learned Iriſhman, by his zeal and talents, and a noble and generous duke were raiſed up by heaven as the diſtinguiſhed inſtruments of cauſing to ſpring and flouriſh in thoſe cold and northern regions what it was once fooliſhly thought could only ſhoot with vigour in the warm climates of the Leſſer Aſia, of Greece or Italy. Francis Hutchinſon having come into Scotland to profeſs philoſophy and the ſtudies of humanity in the univerſity of Glaſgow, diffuſed through the whole country, by his lectures and diſcourſes, as well as by his excellent printed works, a lively taſte for the ſtudies of philoſophy and learning.

Senza annoverare, ad uno ad uno, gli ingeni ſublimi che illuſtrarono con nuove ſcoperte le mathematike e la filoſofia ſperimentale, o con meglior chiarezza, preciſione ed eleganza le trattarono nei libri loro, come Simpſon, Maclaurin, Ferguſon, e Cullen, ſi vede coltivare con mirabile ed inaſpettato ſucceſſo la ſtoria *e fiorire egregiamente ogni genere di poeſia.*

Without enumerating one by one thoſe ſublime geniuſes who by new diſcoveries have illuſtrated the mathematics or natural philoſophy, or have treated them in their books with greater clearneſs, preciſion and elegance, ſuch as Simpſon, Maclaurin, Ferguſon and Cullen, hiſtory hath been cultivated amongſt them with wonderful and unexpected ſucceſs, and poetry of all kinds hath flouriſhed greatly.

Il nome di Tompſon, poeta none meno eccellente nel tragico che nel didattico, ſara un giorno, come quello di Pope chiaro e famoſo. Le ſue quat-

The name of Thompſon, a poet no leſs eminent in tragic than didactic compoſitions, will be one day no leſs known and celebrated than that of Pope. His *four ſea-*

tro ſtagioni dell' anno *gia ſi leggono per tutto con infinito piacere dagli amatori della buona poeſia, e le ſue tragedie par che oſcurin la gloria che Addiſon s' avea acquiſtata col ſuo Catone.*

L' Epigoniade del Signor Wilkie ſarebbe un poema pregioveliſſimo ſed foſſe venuto alla luce in altri tempi; illa ora che Omero e ſi conoſciuto in Inghilterra, tanto per lo ſtudio che vi ſi fa del Greco, come per la famoſa verſione di Pope, non e maraviglia ſi il Signor Wilkie non trova maggior numero di leggitori.

Blacklock ſara a poſteri una favola come e addeſſo un prodigio. E parra un finto problema, che un uomo affatto cieco dall' eta di tre anni, oltre d' eper divenuto ſi valente maeſtro di varie lingue, Greca, Latina, Italiana e Franceſe, ſia ancor nella propria lingua, un gran poeta, &c.

I magiori teatri di Londra hanno piu d' una volta applaudito alle poeſie dramatiche del Signor Malet e del Signor Giovanni Hume. Ma non fu pero la poeſie quella parte di letteratura che con proprio e ſingolar vanto coltivarona gli Scozzeſi. L'Inghilterra chi e abondantemente ricca e proveduta d' ogni genere di libri eccellenti, contava ap-

ſons of the year are already univerſally read with infinite pleaſure by the lovers of good poetry, and his tragedies ſeem to obſcure the glory that Addiſon had acquired by his Cato.

The Epigoniad of Mr Wilkie would have been a moſt eſtimable production, if it had come to light in other times: But, at preſent, that Homer is ſo well known in England, both by the ſtudy of the Greek language which prevails there, and by the celebrated verſion of Mr Pope, it is no wonder that Mr Wilkie finds not a greater number of readers.

Blacklock will be to future times a fable, he is a prodigy to the preſent; and it will ſeem a ſtory contrived on purpoſe to puzzle and aſtoniſh, that a man wholly blind from three years of age, beſides having acquired the knowledge of various languages, Greek, Latin, Italian and French, ſhould at the ſame time be a great poet in his own.

The great theatres of London have more than once given their applauſe to the drama's of Mr Mallet and of Mr John Hume. Poetry, however, is not that branch of literature which the Scots have cultivated with a glory proper and peculiar to themſelves. England, although abundantly rich and well provided of all kinds of excellent

...come ho detto ſopra, qualche buono ſtorico. Era reſervato alla Scozia di compire in ſi notabile parte la biblioteca Ingleſe. Chi e mai tra letterati Europei, che non conoſca e non celebri le opere del Signor Hume? Chi e che non legga e non amiri ſpezialmente le ſue ſtorie?

Una grand opera in genere di ſtoria avrebbe per avventura partorito alla ſua nazione il Signor Smollet, quando aveſſe preferito, come e proprio de' grand' ingegni, la perpetua gloria alla preſente guadagno e un nome onorato al contanti ſtampatore.

Ma ben merito ſincera lode ed immortale il Signor Robertſon, il quale avendo preſo ad illuſtrare con egregio lavoro l' antica ſtoria Scozzeſe ed i tratti piu relevanti della ſtoria moderna ſi ſegnali altamente per guidizio e per fino diſcernimento fra gli ſcrittori piu nobili in queſto genere, e ſupero per l' eleganza del ſuo ſtile non ſolamente gli autori compatrioti ſuoi, ma ancora i piu commendati autori Ingleſi nativi.

Il fatto e ad ogni modo incontraſtabile, che i principali autore che fecero onore alla letteratura Ingleſe in queſti ultimi anni, e a queſti giornipreſenti, ſono nati ed allevati in Iſcozia.

books, could ſcarce reckon among theſe, as was before obſerved a good hiſtorian. It was reſerved to Scotland to compleat in ſo remarkable a branch the Engliſh library. Who among the Literati of Europe knows not, and does not celebrate the works of Mr Hume? Who in particular does not read and admire his hiſtories?

Mr Smollet might perhaps have produced to his country a great work of the hiſtoric kind, if he had preferred, as is peculiar to great geniules, an honourable name to the pay of his bookſeller.

But Mr Robertſon hath juſtly merited unſtained and immortal praiſe, who having applied himſelf with extraordinary labour to illuſtrate the antient Scottiſh hiſtory, together with the moſt ſtriking paſſages of the modern, hath by his judgment and accurate diſcernment ſignalized himſelf amongſt the nobleſt writers of that claſs, and at the ſame time ſurpaſt in elegance of ſtile not only his compatriot authors, but even the moſt celebrated native Engliſh writers.

The fact is altogether indiſputable that the principal authors who for ſome years paſt have done honour to the Engliſh literature, and thoſe who do ſo at preſent, have been born and educated in Scotland.

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